

**THE BEECHAM MANUAL FOR FAMILY PRACTICE.** Edited by John Fry. (Pp viii + 232. £11.95). Lancaster: MTP Press, 1982.

READING and, with the help of colleagues, 'field-testing' this manual at various times throughout the Christmas season, I was struck with how similar the editors' problem is with that of the housewife. The latter has to recycle traditional dishes in a fresh manner just as the editors of this manual attempt to rearrange material that has appeared elsewhere often by the same publisher and invariably at the same exorbitant cost.

The original manual appeared in New Zealand and later in Australia where it was intended to be a set of instructions for the practice team in their care of patients. In producing "an entirely new Manual" the British editors have intentionally adopted a concise didactic style. It is here, in the actual form, that the first weakness emerges. General practice, of all the major aspects of medicine is ill-suited to such a black and white presentation. The impression given is that the mere absorption of the notably well laid-out material is all that is required. Undergraduate students in well-run departments and hopefully postgraduates, soon learn that additional skills are required for general practice. Reading this book would not acquaint or equip the student with such skills.

The second weakness concerns the content. I wonder whether the editors seriously considered the reactions of a real U.K. Practice Team. Our receptionists were not exactly pleased at their total omission while the nursing health visiting colleagues I approached radically altered some sections. Suffice it to say that team management (if this is not too suspect a concept) involves negotiation, brief formal and informal meetings, close proximity in the same premises and responsibility for the same patients. A really good manual, by which I mean one that would be jointly adhered to, is more likely to follow from such circumstances and it is not the tidy process Dr. Fry and his colleagues would suggest. Could that be why topics such as dementia, alcoholism, mental handicap, cervical cytology and sexually transmitted disease are scarcely mentioned?

In conclusion, this type of work is to be found elsewhere, even by the same authors! It is to be found in a form, written and even video recorded, more relevant to the demands of general practice. It is also to be found at a lower price. Nevertheless, the range of this manual is broad, it is well-indexed and could find a limited place for students spending their first attachment in general practice in their clinical years. It would go some way to ensuring that a given topic is covered.

PMR

**SYMPOSIUM ON RENAL DISEASE.** Edited by R. Passmore. (Pp 171. £5.00). Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians, 1982.

THIS collection of papers deals with many aspects of renal disease stressing the importance of laboratory investigations in clinical diagnosis. There are concise accounts of the classification of glomerular lesions and of current ideas on their pathogenesis with emphasis on immunological mechanisms. The section on the renin-angiotensin system brings the reader up-to-date on the role of the juxtaglomerular apparatus and of prostaglandins in blood pressure homeostasis. The chapter on drugs and the kidney is a very useful account of the precautions necessary in prescribing for patients with impaired renal function and discusses the increasing problem of drug induced renal disease.

This little book makes interesting reading and I would recommend it to MRCP and MRCPATH candidates as well as those engaged in the investigation and treatment of patients with renal disease.

CMH

**A PRIMER OF HUMAN NEUROANATOMY.** By Cynthia Reid. Second Edition. (Pp 199, 90 Figs. £5.75). London: Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd., 1983.

THIS book has 20 chapters and is illustrated with 90 line drawings. The author gives a clear account of the topography and internal structure of the brain and spinal cord and frequently mentions functional implications. Included are chapters on the limbic system, the reticular formation, the blood supply and cerebrospinal fluid.

Although this second edition has added only five pages its cost is almost double that of the first. Nevertheless, it will prove to be a good investment for medical and dental students and others needing a concise and well-written neuroanatomy text. It is highly recommended.

TJH